

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4911

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS UNN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUXEMBOURG 0102

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, PINR, LU

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE ON SOVIET
ACTIVITIES IN LUXEMBOURG

REF: LUXEMBOURG 0076 (NOTAL)

1. LUXEMBOURG PRESS HAS GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY TO ARTICLE
BY GEORGE TABER IN CURRENT TIME MAGAZINE CLAIMING THAT
GRAND DUCHY IS A CENTER FOR SOVIET INTELLIGENCE
OPERATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND IDENTIFYING ALLEGED KGB
RESIDENT HERE. (ASSUME ARTICLE, NOT YET SEEN BY EMBASSY,
IS IN EDITION OF FEBRUARY 2.)

2. ALTHOUGH ARTICLE ITSELF HAS NOT YET HIT LOCAL NEWS-
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STANDS, THE CENTER-LEANING REPUBLICAN LORRAIN (INDEPENDENT)

CARRIED AN ARTICLE IN ITS JANUARY 26 EDITION HEADLINED "LUXEMBOURG: PIVOT POINT FOR SOVIET ESPIONAGE IN EUROPE?" AND FOLLOWED IT TODAY WITH SEVERAL COLUMNS OF ELABORATION, SPECULATION, AND SOVIET DENIALS. THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL LUXEMBURGER WORT ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD INVESTIGATE THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE'S ALLEGATIONS OF SOVIET COVERT ACTIVITIES HERE, AND BOTH PAPERS PRINTED THE NAME OF SOVIET PRESS ATTACHE ANATOLI MESHCHERIAKOV, IDENTIFIED BY TIME AS KGB RESIDENT. THE SOCIALIST TAGEBLATT SCOFFED AT THE REPORT, DECLINING TO REPRINT THE DETAILS AND HINTING THAT ARTICLE MAY HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY AMERICAN COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AGENTS.

3. SOVIET REACTION TO ARTICLE WAS IMMEDIATE. WITHIN HOURS AFTER THE FIRST ARTICLE APPEARED, SOVIET DCM ALEXANDER MATVEEV CONVENED A PRESS CONFERENCE TO DENY CATEGORICALLY ALL ALLEGATIONS OF COVERT SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL AND THOSE OF TIME MAGAZINE IN PARTICULAR. DENYING THAT ANY OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL WERE IN FACT AGENTS OF SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, HE DECLARED THAT THE ARTICLE'S AUTHORS "WISHED TO TURN ATTENTION AWAY FROM RECENT REVELATIONS OF THE IDENTITY OF MEMBERS OF THE CIA." HE SAID THE ARTICLE WAS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI AND SAID THE REASONS FOR ITS PUBLICATION ALSO INCLUDED A DESIRE TO EMBARRASS THE USSR ON THE EVE OF ITS 25TH CONGRESS AND TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF CURRENT DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF LUXEMBOURG'S INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SERVICE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS).

4. COMMENT: AT END OF MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR AND DCM ON JANUARY 27, PRIME MINISTER THORN REMARKED THAT ARTICLE WOULD "NOT BE HELPFUL" TO HIM IN UPCOMING DEBATE IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OVER FUTURE OF LUXEMBOURG'S INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. HE SAID OPPONENTS OF PROPOSED NEW CHARTER FOR SERVICE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS COULD BE EXPECTED TO CHARGE THAT ARTICLE HAD BEEN INSPIRED BY AMERICANS OR OTHERS WHO PRESUMABLY WANT LUXEMBOURG TO RETAIN OR EVEN STRENGTHEN ITS INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT IT WAS ABSURD TO THINK THE UNITED STATES WOULD INTERVENE SO CRUELY IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A FRIENDLY COUNTRY
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AND ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE WAS ENTIRELY THE IDEA AND RESPONSIBILITY OF TIME MAGAZINE. THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT WHILE IT WOULD NOT MAKE HIS POSITION IN THE DEBATE ANY EASIER, HE DID NOT EXPECT THE ARTICLE TO HAVE ANY SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS.
FARKAS

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